

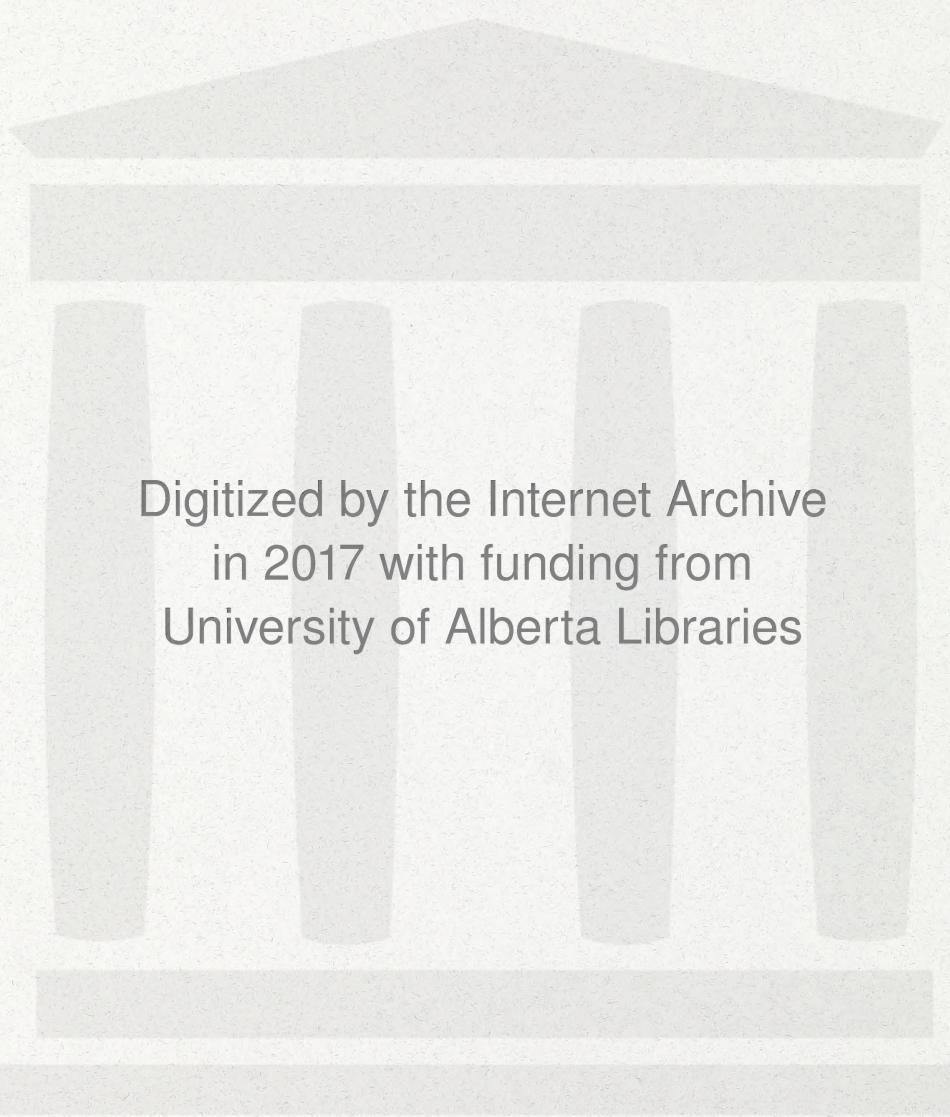
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The Premier's Council  
on the Status of Persons  
with Disabilities

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**Annual Report**  
**1991-92**

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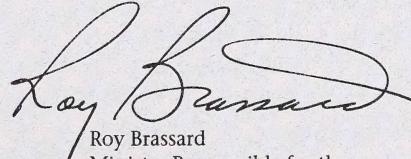
September 9, 1992

The Honourable Don Getty  
Premier of Alberta  
307 Legislature Building  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2B6

Dear Sir:

I have the honour to present the fourth Annual Report of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. This report covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 1992.

Respectfully submitted,

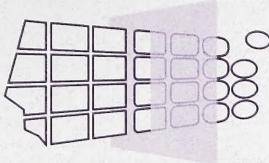


Roy Brassard  
Minister Responsible for the  
Premier's Council on the  
Status of Persons with Disabilities

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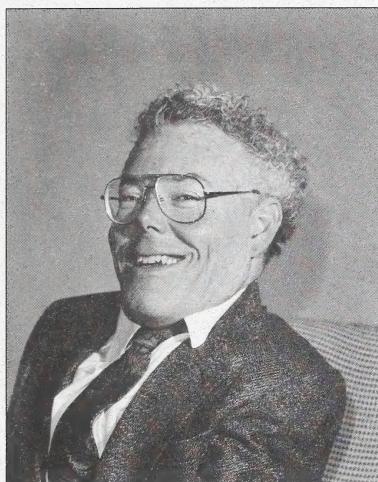
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## Message from the Chairperson

It's with mixed feelings that I review the Council's fourth year. This year we witnessed some significant positive change, such as the improvements in the Home Care Program to include all people regardless of age, and the announcement of barrier free transportation pilot projects across Alberta by Alberta Transportation and Utilities. Both of these improvements are the results of recommendations made in our *Action Plan*.



Unfortunately, the list of what we consider successes in 1991 - 1992 is all too brief. At many points during this year, we had the impression of swimming upstream; of taking one step forward and one back. While the above recommendations were acted upon, dozens more contained in the same document were not. Change, it seems, is slow to come. Now, as we near the midpoint of the Council's ten year life span, it might be appropriate to review the early days of the Premier's Council, and refresh our memories of its reason for existence.

As of 1986, about 280,000 Albertans had a disability - a full 12% of the province's population. Statistics tell us that this population, which by now is undoubtedly much larger, forms the most underprivileged, impoverished, dependent minority in Alberta. In the 1980's, the provincial government began to recognize this fact, and in 1988, it established the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities to provide advice to itself on issues of disability. The Premier's Council was designed to give Albertans with disabilities a single, clear voice that would have easy access to the ears of the government that created it. The Council's Mission Statement, written into its legislation, is as follows:

***"To enhance and promote the opportunity for full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the province."***

As the Council set out to do exactly that, it became obvious that there were two major areas where transformational change needed to take place: public attitudes and public policy. The Council would be able to achieve its mission only when these two areas reflected equality, ability and inclusion rather than paternalism, pity and segregation for Albertans with a disability.

Our expectations, then, were to see this transformational change in the Council's lifetime. We expected to be witness to the removal of barriers preventing full and equal participation of persons with disabilities. We expected to begin to see disability viewed as normal, not abnormal.

Now, as we enter our fifth year, our expectations have been reduced somewhat. We have been frustrated to a large extent by what appears to be nothing more than a lack of will to change. More often than not, our frustrations stem from negotiating with bureaucracies which have not been given political permission to move on matters of sensitivity. It's obvious that a strong message of commitment from the elected members of government is needed to overcome these impasses within the various bureaucracies.

Real solutions will happen only when decision makers begin to think in terms of investment, rather than cost. When I say investment, I am not referring to massive injections of dollars. I am talking about government

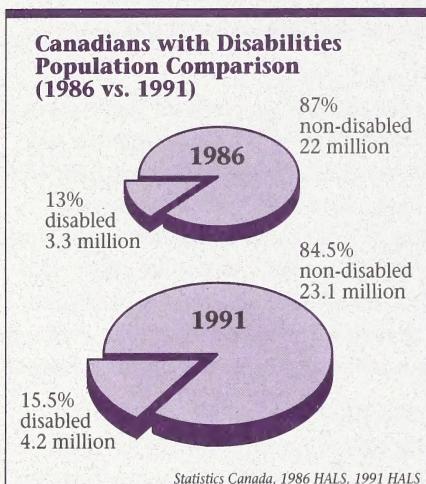
examining its priorities. I am talking about reallocation of funds from archaic, paternal approaches and programs to those which empower Albertans with disabilities. I am talking about the political will and courage necessary to establish new attitudes towards disability.

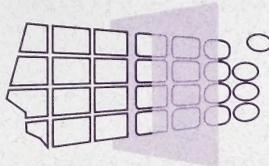
Only by investing in Albertans with disabilities will their *abilities* shine through. Only through investment will this significant minority cease to be dependent on society. Only investment will allow Albertans with disabilities to become equal, contributing citizens. Failing to make this investment will not only doom hundreds of thousands of Albertans to a life of second class citizenship in the 21st century, it will cost society untold billions of dollars years down the road.

Disability is no longer a matter of "us" and "them". As a result of an aging population, it's predicted that one in five people in our province will have a disability by the year 2000. In other words, it's almost a certainty that disability will be a reality in the average Alberta family by that year. Will that person enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities as their non-disabled counterparts?

I would like to thank the Members of the Premier's Council and the secretariat who have the same dream I do - a dream of an egalitarian society in Alberta where a Council like ours is no longer needed. I would also like to thank the many representatives from both government and the community who share our dream, and who have contributed in 1991 - 1992 to move that dream a few steps closer to reality.

The potential for change exists, so does the opportunity. The people of Alberta have already shown us what the answers are. A little commitment from the top down will catalyze so much. In the coming year and beyond, the Premier's Council will do its best to garner that commitment, in the hopes that future generations of persons with disabilities will enjoy full citizenship in Alberta.

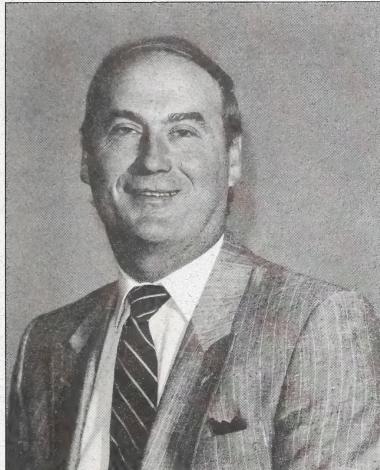




## Message from the Executive Director

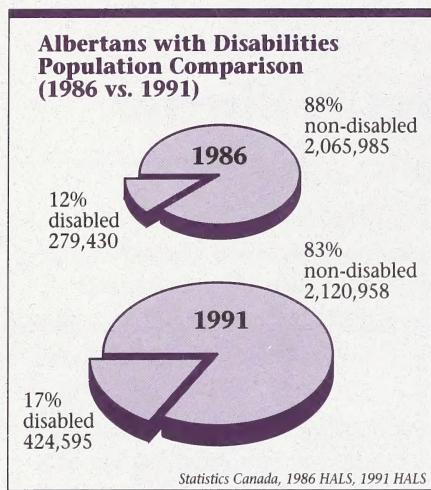
The role of the Council secretariat is to carry out the day-to-day activities of the Premier's Council. These activities are intended to achieve full implementation of the *Action Plan*, education of the public, and completion of other projects identified by the Council. The *Highlights from 1991 - 92* section of this annual report gives just a flavour of the diverse activities undertaken by the secretariat to realize these ends during the past year.

Why are these activities so diverse? The legislation governing the Premier's Council defines a mandate to advise the provincial government. However, it also enables the Council to "make referrals and recommendations to and consult and collaborate with all levels of government, government agencies, volunteer associations, businesses, universities and other persons on matters affecting and concerning the status of persons with disabilities." As the work of the Council proceeds, we find ourselves engaging in an ever-widening circle of activities. It is, of course, necessary to focus a large part of our attention on provincial government ministers and department personnel. But if the fundamental change in attitudes that the Chairperson mentions in his message is to occur, we must continually challenge and educate *all* those groups listed in the legislation.



At the back of our minds there ticks a clock that reminds us of our own resolve to see the Council disappear under its sunset clause in 1998. The question always is what legacy will be left after ten years. Policy affecting people with disabilities will continue to develop and change long after 1998, so it is important that those who are directly affected by such policy have an appreciation of their ability to influence decision makers.

In the 1991-92 fiscal year, we began to experiment with the development of regional advisory committees made up of "grass roots" people with disabilities. We have found that there is a growing resentment of service providers who purport to speak for people with disabilities. They are perceived by their constituents to have their own self interests at heart, and to be more concerned with job preservation than truly meeting the needs of those they serve.

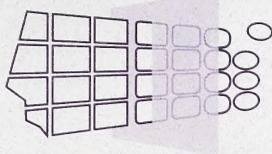


The experiment began in Calgary in September 1991. The opportunity presented itself when the Council secretariat accepted a new challenge to develop a discussion paper on constitutional issues as they relate to disability. The constitutional forum that we held in Calgary was combined with an open invitation to people with disabilities to meet with the Chairperson and Executive Director of the Council. From this meeting, the advisory group was formed. We are hopeful that good things will result in the future from our relationship with this group.

I would like to echo Gary McPherson's sentiments that change is often too slow. As we struggle to influence our provincial government, we become more and more aware of the tangle of pressures that must be unravelled. And as we take on projects like issues for aboriginal people with disabilities, the complexity of jurisdictional red tape is

astounding. It is easy to see how people in positions of influence can be overwhelmed by it all.

This past year has been a busy and productive one for the secretariat. At times we too feel that we are about to become overwhelmed, but the issues are too important, and the time is too short. Thank you to all who have assisted us during the year to move closer to our goal of full and equal participation for people with disabilities.



## Breaking Down Barriers

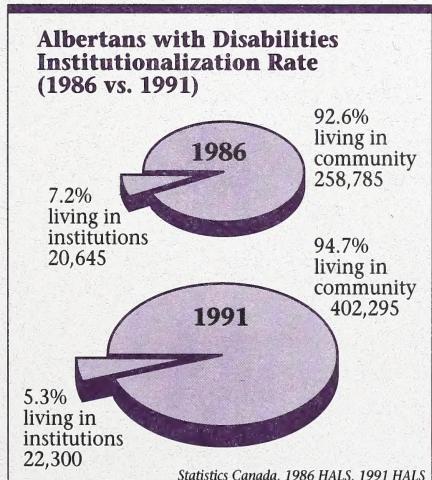
Breaking down barriers - in a sense, it forms the brunt of the Premier's Council's work, and has since its inception.

It began with barriers broken down by one man as he undertook a 40,000 kilometre, two year trek around the world. Rick Hansen's remarkable achievement left a lasting legacy of disability awareness worldwide and, in particular, in Canada. Here in Alberta, Rick's accomplishment resulted in a commitment from Premier Don Getty to establish the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Albertans with disabilities would finally have a single, strong voice to communicate their concerns to government, and government would have in place a knowledgeable body to advise them in policy areas affecting their constituents with disabilities.

Consisting of up to fifteen members and a small secretariat, the Council was legislated into existence in 1988. Its mission was essentially to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in the life of the province. As it turned out, this has proved to be no small task.

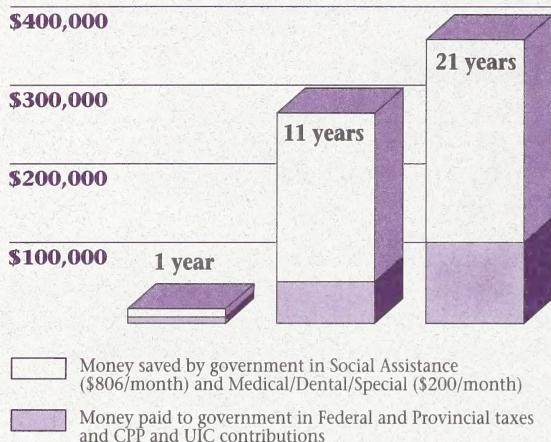
Almost immediately, it became obvious that the Council would have to spend its limited resources breaking down two huge barriers if it were to achieve its mission. These were the barriers of paternalistic public policy and negative public attitudes concerning people with disabilities. In other words, disability policy would have to change to reflect the principles of equality instead of charity, and public attitudes would have to change to reflect acceptance and inclusion rather than pity and segregation.

The Council's first step to break down these barriers was to extensively consult stakeholders in Alberta in order to arrive at a shared vision of expectation. The resulting document, *Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta*, outlined the problems in public policy and attitudes, and presented a framework which change could be based on. *Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta* was widely endorsed and praised by consumers, professionals and agencies.



## Cost Savings to Government

When people with disabilities find employment\*



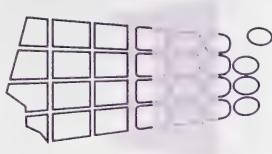
\* Source: A case study of "Ruby", from Creative Employment Options, published by B.C.-based Neil Squire Foundation. Figures are in today's dollars and do not take into consideration cost of living increases.

The next step came in 1990, when the Council published its *Action Plan*. This comprehensive document, based on the principles outlined in *Towards a New Vision of Abilities in Alberta*, examined government policy in nine areas, and made specific recommendations for change. Reception to the *Action Plan* has been mixed: some departments, like Transportation and Utilities, have embraced it. Others have, to a large extent, ignored its recommendations.

Talking about change, it seems, is easy. Actually grinding the bureaucratic gears into motion is another thing altogether. Therein lies the most important role Council sees for itself as it nears the halfway point in its limited ten year lifespan - breaking down barriers of attitudes and policies in

government preventing acceptance of the *Action Plan* and, ultimately, people with disabilities from achieving full and equal participation in our society.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities: breaking down barriers, one at a time.



## This Is Your Council

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### **Rick Hansen** Honourary Chairperson

Rick Hansen is best known for his Man in Motion World Tour that, when completed in 1987, raised \$23 million for spinal cord research, rehabilitation, wheelchair sport, and awareness. Since that time, Mr. Hansen has continued his quest for raising awareness of disability related issues. In addition to numerous speaking engagements, he acts as a consultant on disability issues to, among others, the University of British Columbia and the federal government. During this fiscal year, a large portion of Mr. Hansen's time and energy was spent in his capacity of chairman of the very successful Independence '92 conference.

### **Gary McPherson** Chairperson

Gary McPherson has been extensively involved with disability for most of his life, serving on numerous committees and winning various awards for service to persons with disabilities. He has been the Premier's Council Chairperson since its inception in 1988. This past fiscal year also saw him continue his terms as President of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association and Director of the Canadian Federation of Sports Organizations of the Physically Disabled. Mr. McPherson has used a wheelchair since the age of nine.

### **Peter Aubry** Council Member

Peter Aubry was reappointed for a second term with the Council on January 8, 1992. He has a son with schizophrenia, and, as a result, spends a great deal of time advocating on behalf of people with mental illness. This fiscal year, he continued his involvement as a member of both the Calgary Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society and the University of Calgary Research Committee for the Ciba Geigy Chair in Schizophrenia Research. He is also a member of the Calgary Housing Committee, which determines housing requirements for special needs groups. Mr. Aubry has a B.Sc. in geology and is president of Aubry Consultants Ltd.



**Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities**  
Back Row, Left to Right: Norma Stasiuk, G. (Sandy) Morrice, Gary Taylor, Phil Stephan, Neil Marshall, Ray Hegerat, Peter Aubry.  
Front Row, Left to Right: Wendy Bryden, Gary McPherson, Jim Vargo, Harvey Ball, Everett Soop, Kaye Brock.  
Missing: Cheryl Crocker.

which relocated into the heart of downtown Calgary. She also worked with the Alberta Coalition on Motor Vehicle Trauma, the provincial Committee on Seat Belt Publicity and Enforcement, the Calgary Social Planning and Development Group, and the University of Calgary Behavior Support Team. Ms. Brock is a founding member of the Head Injury Association of Alberta, and continues to work with that Association as well.

### **Wendy Bryden** Council Member

Wendy Bryden has done volunteer work in teaching people with disabilities how to ski. While serving on the Board of Directors of the XV Olympic Winter Games Organizing Committee, she was responsible for the Disabled Skiing Exhibition featuring disabled skiers. Mrs. Bryden majored in journalism and is a freelance writer.

### **Cheryl Crocker** Council Member

Cheryl Crocker was reappointed for a second term with the Council on January 8, 1992. This year she assisted in the review of both Individualized Funding and the proposed Vulnerable Persons Act. Ms. Crocker holds degrees in Special Education and Educational Psychology, and is Chair of the Rehabilitation Practitioner Program at Grant MacEwan Community College. She is currently a board member of the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, as well as Selections - Career

### **Harvey Ball** Council Member

Harvey Ball brings the unique perspective of someone who has multiple sclerosis to the Premier's Council. Much of his professional experience has been in construction, although he has also worked in the fields of real estate and brokerage sales. Currently, he is Director and President of a family construction and development business.

### **Kaye Brock** Council Member

Kaye Brock is extensively involved in the field of head injury. During 1991-1992 fiscal year, she continued as President of the Head Injured Relearning Society,

Support Services. Previously, she has worked as a vocational counsellor for Minnesota Diversified Industries and as Client Services Supervisor for Services for the Handicapped (Alberta Family and Social Services).

**Martin Goldstein**  
Council Member

Martin Goldstein submitted his resignation to the Premier's Council on July 26, 1991, in order to pursue his teaching career in Ontario. Mr. Goldstein, who is deaf, holds a BA and MA in Counselling of the Deaf. He is a former Dean of Residence at the Alberta School for the Deaf and a teacher of hearing impaired children at Queen Elizabeth High School in Calgary. The Council wishes to thank Mr. Goldstein for the significant contributions he made during his tenure as Member.

**Ray Hegerat**  
Council Member

As a person with a learning disability, Ray Hegerat is well-suited for his position teaching special needs students at Jasper Place Composite High School in Edmonton. In fact, this past year saw him nominated for an Alberta Teacher's Award in Excellence. As well, he participated in a Learning Strategies Conference for special needs students. In the past, he has served on the Committee for Disabled Students Policy at the University of Alberta. Mr. Hegerat received assistance from the Learning Disabled Programme at the U of A, and subsequently graduated with distinction from the Faculty of Education.

**Randy Hogle**  
Council Member

Randy Hogle's term as Member of the Premier's Council expired on October 6, 1991. Mr. Hogle, who is visually impaired, is a Director of both CNIB and Employment Services for the Physically Disabled. He has a BA and LL.B., and is a partner with the Edmonton law firm Hogle and Russell. The Council wishes to acknowledge the significant contributions Mr. Hogle made during his tenure as Member.

### **Neil Marshall** Council Member

Neil Marshall was appointed as a Member of the Premier's Council on January 8, 1992. Mr. Marshall brings a wealth of knowledge from Alberta's Deaf and hard of hearing community to the Council. At present, he is the President of the Alberta Association of the Deaf, and a member of both the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association of the Deaf and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (Calgary). Mr. Marshall graduated from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. with a BA in Computer Science and Mathematics.

### **Sandy Morrice** Council Member

As the result of a rail accident in 1974, Sandy Morrice has had one leg amputated. Since that time, he has been very active in the Sledge Hockey and Ice Picking Association. In addition to his work with the Premier's Council during this past year, Mr. Morrice was extensively involved as a volunteer for the Medicine Hat chapter of National Access Awareness Week. He has worked as a computer programmer at Canadian Forces Base Suffield for the past nine years.

### **Everett Soop** Council Member

Everett Soop is extensively involved with disability issues and, in particular, their relation to aboriginal Albertans. This year saw him continue as Chairman of the Premier's Council Task Force on Issues for Aboriginal Persons with Disabilities. He is a former board member of the Alberta Indian Health Care Commission and a former member of the Alberta Advisory Board for Recreation for the Disabled. Mr. Soop has muscular dystrophy and is hard of hearing.

### **Norma Stasiuk** Council Member

Norma Stasiuk is a teacher in the Westlock School Division. During her teaching career, she has taught special education classes. Mrs. Stasiuk is the author of a handbook for teachers on how to adapt the regular curriculum for children with special learning needs in the classroom.

### **Phil Stephan** Council Member

Phil Stephan was appointed as a Member of the Premier's Council on January 8, 1992. Mr. Stephan has a wealth of experience with people with mental disabilities. At present, he is the Executive Director and C.E.O. of the Red Deer Association for the Mentally Handicapped, an organization he's been a part of for over four years. A strong proponent of community living options for people with developmental disabilities, Mr. Stephan has a B.Comm. from the University of Alberta, as well as a Diploma in Business Administration from Red Deer College.

### **Gary Taylor** Council Member

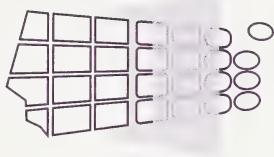
Gary Taylor was appointed as a Member of the Premier's Council on January 8, 1992. Mr. Taylor, who has been visually impaired since birth, has over two decades of experience as a teacher and counsellor, of which a good deal has been spent working with students with a diverse range of disabilities. Currently, he is a Support Programs coordinator and Guidance Counsellor for Glen Avon Protestant School District #5. Mr. Taylor has a B.Ed. (AD) and a BA in Psychology.

### **Jim Vargo** Council Member

Jim Vargo's main personal and professional interest is spinal cord injury. He holds a Ph.D. in counselling psychology, and is Associate Dean of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta and Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Rehabilitation. This year, in addition to his duties at these positions, Dr. Vargo conducted two workshops on disability, and participated in the Minister's Forum on Special Education. He also delivered the keynote address at Celebration 200: Partners in Ability at Grant MacEwan Community College.

### **In Memory: Jean Packer**

Jean Packer died suddenly and unexpectedly on March 26, 1992. Mrs. Packer was a Member of the Premier's Council since its inception in 1988 until October 6, 1991 when her term expired. A respiratory quadriplegic, she was a valued and much loved Member who defied the reigning philosophy of her time by moving out of an institutional environment and choosing to live in the community with her husband, Gordon Packer. The Premier's Council Members and Secretariat wish to acknowledge her significant contributions in enhancing and promoting the opportunity for full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the province.



## Highlights from 1991-92

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With government's reluctance to unconditionally accept the *Action Plan* during the previous year, it became apparent that a great deal of work would be needed in fiscal year 1991 - 92 in order to have many of the document's recommendations accepted. As a result, this past year was truly a busy one for Council Members and the Secretariat.

In addition to the multitude of meetings held and attended concerning *Action Plan* recommendations, Council also continued the task of realizing their Mission on several other fronts, including extensive work revolving around constitutional reform and its effect on persons with disabilities, problems facing aboriginals with disabilities, and alternate communication needs for persons with disabilities.

### April

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At a meeting in Edmonton, the Council discussed implementation of *Action Plan* recommendations with provincial organizations. The Council held a meeting with the Edmonton Public School Board to discuss integration, and attended a provincial meeting of special education administrators in Red Deer. A major presentation on Community Supports was made to health unit associations in Banff. A presentation was made at the Toronto Conference of Citizens for Independence in Living and Breathing. A meeting to discuss employment equity was held with the Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

### May

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A great deal of energy was spent on education issues - the Council worked with Athabasca University to develop outreach programs for persons with disabilities, participated and presented at the Minister's Forum on Special Education, and discussed integration in meetings with supervisors and coordinators of special education, as well as the U of A's Dean of Education. The Council participated in the Active Living Alliance for Canadians - 1991 Spring Forum, and assisted the Brain Injury Working Group to finalize funding priorities. In conjunction with Economic Trade and Development, work continued on the Ability Plus Program. A meeting with the Human Rights Commission was held to discuss mutual interests. Council met with Career Development and Employment to review policies regarding equipment for students in the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP) training programs. A meeting with Family and Social Services took place to discuss a framework for a review of Handicapped Children's Services. During this month, government formally responded to the *Action Plan* in the legislature.

## **June**

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The Council participated in numerous meetings with Health and several community groups to discuss changes to Aids to Daily Living (AADL). A presentation was made at the Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres conference. The Council reviewed Calgary General Hospital's psychiatric program, and accepted an invitation to participate in the Home Care Advisory Committee as a permanent member. A meeting was held with Jerome Schein, Chair of Deafness Studies at the U of A, and Ralph Westwood, Assistant Director/Program Coordination of Advanced Education, to discuss supports for post-secondary students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

## **July**

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The Council met with Premier Getty to discuss various concerns. An article examining the impact of changes to AADL was submitted to HospitAlta magazine. The Council continued to work with Alberta Health to modify AADL. Also in Health, the Home Care Program was expanded to include people under age 65, as recommended in the *Action Plan*. In conjunction with community organizations, work began on plans to hold a fall forum with consumers regarding *Action Plan* implementation and constitutional reform. The Council participated in an employment equity/work force diversification task force. A meeting with Deputy Treasurer Al O'Brien was held to discuss reallocation of resources, the Community Supports Program and employment equity.

## **August**

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At a meeting with senior officials of Transportation and Utilities, *Action Plan* recommendations and implementation strategies were discussed. The Council also worked with Transportation and Utilities, as well as the Solicitor General, to review changes to the Handicapped Parking Placard Program. Throughout the month, meetings were held with Health, Career Development and Employment, and the Personnel Administration Office.

## September

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The Council met with the Provincial Advisory Committee on Mental Health Issues to clarify mandates and discuss issues of common concern. The Council's position on integration was presented to Education officials. At a press conference in Edmonton, the consultation process for issues affecting aboriginal persons with disabilities was officially announced. A lecture was given to the Rehabilitation Practitioner's Program at Grant MacEwan Community College. A series of housing conferences sponsored by Handicapped Housing Society were attended. The Council held a consumer's forum in Calgary, and a regional advisory committee was subsequently established there. A presentation was made to the Long Term Care Association regarding young disabled people in long term care. A meeting with Rick Hansen was held to update him of progress. A quarterly Council meeting was held in Edmonton. Responsibility for the Premier's Council was officially moved from the Honourable Jim Dinning, Minister of Education, to the Honourable Roy Brassard, Minister Responsible for Seniors.

## October

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The Council held meetings with Deputy Prime Minister Don Mazankowski, official opposition critic Beth Phinney, and Secretary of State to discuss concerns over the National Strategy Program. A visioning workshop on the future role of health units was attended. Keynote speeches were given at the Rehabilitation Outcome Measures Conference at the U of A, and the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities annual conference. The Council attended the Canadian Mental Health Association's provincial conference on advocacy, and met with provincial coordinators of disabled students services from post-secondary institutions.

## November

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The Council participated in the Canadian Paraplegic Association's spinal cord injury research symposium. A meeting was held with the Learning Disability Association regarding respective positions on integration. The Council attended a luncheon with Canadian Urban Transportation Association, where Minister Al "Boomer" Adair announced barrier free transportation policy and pilot projects. Assistance was given to the Barrier Free Design Committee to revise the *Barrier Free Design Guide* in order to reflect changes to the Alberta Building Code. The Alternate Communications Advisory Committee was established, and the Council attended the Education Minister's Round Table Discussion on his *Vision for the Nineties* document. Presentations on the Community Supports concept were made to the Alberta Healthcare Association, and health professionals in Fort McMurray. A meeting was held with Ministry of Seniors officials to discuss mutual roles.

## **December**

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The Council hosted the third annual meeting of provincial advisory councils in Edmonton, attended by representatives from eight provinces. Topics of discussion for the meeting included constitutional reform, Omnibus legislation, and National Strategy. A national press conference followed. The Council met with Minister of Secretary of State Robert de Cotret to discuss National Strategy. Meetings took place with several faculties of U of A to plan strategies for communicating the Council's Vision. The Council met Minister of Family and Social Services John Oldring and Minister of Health Nancy Betkowski to garner support for the Community Supports concept. A series of meetings commenced with the Deputy Minister Responsible for Seniors to discuss the proposed Michener Centre Act. An invitation to sit on a planning committee for a provincial employment equity conference (Bridges '92) was accepted.

## **January**

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A meeting was held with the Minister Responsible for Council to garner support for Community Supports concept. A series of meetings took place with provincial and federal departments providing services to aborigines with disabilities to determine jurisdictions. At a Constitutional Affairs Committee Hearing in Edmonton, the Council presented its position on the impact of constitutional reform on persons with disabilities. A presentation on integration was made to the Student's Association Equity Day at the U of A. The Council began a series of meetings to organize the Alberta contribution to Independence 92. In conjunction with the Alberta Centre for Well Being, a provincial conference was held to discuss the proposed Alberta Information Network. The Council participated in a series of meetings with municipal transportation officials to present the Council's Vision and Transportation and Utilities' policy on barrier free transportation. A quarterly Council meeting was held in Edmonton.

## **February**

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Council met with the Mental Health Services Division of Alberta Health to review their strategic planning initiatives. A meeting with provincial organizations was held to discuss the Community Supports concept. The Council delivered the keynote address for the Canadian Association for Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment conference. The Council attended the NAAW Alberta chapter organizing meeting, as well as the Vista 93 conference.

## March

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The Council held a meeting with the Education Response Centre to determine the feasibility of a joint review of interpreter services in educational settings. A presentation on employment of people with disabilities was made at the Transitions Conference in Edmonton. A meeting with Labour Minister Elaine McCoy took place to discuss the Community Supports concept, as well as employment equity. The Council met with the Advisory Council on Women's Issues, the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Multi-Culturalism to develop a united position on employment equity. A meeting with Family and Social Services took place to review Mainstream 92 initiatives. A presentation on integration was made to the Foothills School Division. Two public forums were held to hear feedback on a draft *Alternative Communications* document. A meeting with Minister Roy Brassard took place to discuss Michener Centre and the Community Supports concept. The Council attended a Parliamentary Standing Committee meeting in Ottawa to discuss Omnibus legislation. The Council held a two day meeting in Red Deer.

## Special Projects

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### Task Force on Issues for Aboriginal Persons with Disabilities

This task force was established in 1991 to undertake a review of disability issues that are specific to Alberta's aboriginal people, including those whose status is Treaty, non-Treaty, Metis and Bill C-31. Because of the jurisdictional complexities associated with aboriginal people in general, the project is a joint venture of the federal Department of Indian Affairs, the Alberta Indian Health Care Commission (funded by the Medical Services Branch of Health and Welfare Canada), and the Premier's Council. Support for the consultation process was also obtained from the Metis Nation of Alberta and the Alberta Indian Association.

Using the *Action Plan* as a guide, consultants interviewed disabled individuals and service providers in aboriginal communities throughout the province to determine the extent to which the *Action Plan* recommendations met or failed to meet their needs. Program and policy review at the federal and provincial levels was also completed. The task force will prepare a report with recommendations to three levels of government: band council, provincial and federal. The report will be released in the 1992-93 fiscal year.

### Alternate Communication Needs of People with Disabilities

One of the areas of concern not addressed by the *Action Plan* was that of communication needs. People with vision, hearing or other disabilities may require alternate forms of communication in order to access information and services, or to participate in certain kinds of activities. In November 1991, an advisory committee was struck to examine issues in five areas of concern: government information and services, justice system, educational materials, sign language interpreters, and communication technology. Committee members were chosen

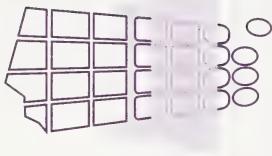
for their expertise related to these topics, whether as a user of the service or a government department member. Consultation with the community took place by means of mail requests for feedback and public forums. Final revisions were to be made over the spring and summer, with a targeted release date in September 1992.

### **Constitutional Reform**

A good portion of the Council's energies were spent in the fall and winter focusing on Constitutional Reform, and its consequences for people with disabilities. A public forum was held in September to hear the views of the public on this matter. Council developed a position paper, and the subject was also the focus of the third annual meeting of provincial advisory councils, which took place in Edmonton in December. Participating bodies at this meeting developed a joint position, and announced it at a national press conference following the three days of meetings. In January, Council presented its position to a Constitutional Affairs Committee hearing in Edmonton, and participated in a weekend Constitutional Conference in Calgary.

### **Other Activities**

Council continued to publish a quarterly newsletter, *Status Report*, to inform interested parties of the Council's activities and provoke discussion of disability issues. In addition to *Status Report*, a quarterly fact sheet, *Status Update*, was introduced in March, 1992. *Status Update* is intended to supplement the information contained in *Status Report*.



## Action Plan Review

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Originally released in March of 1990, the **Action Plan** is a comprehensive document that made 55 recommendations addressing public policy in the following ten areas: training, employment, education, transportation, recreation, housing, accessibility, personal supports, financial supports, and information. The recommendations were made as a direct result of considerable consultation with a large cross-section of stakeholders in Alberta.

For the most part, the Premier's Council has expended a great deal of energy in fiscal year 1991-92 attempting to have **Action Plan** recommendations implemented. This process involved numerous meetings with politicians and bureaucrats, in both one on one and group settings. The Council has, to date, only been partially successful in this process. The following section of this annual report highlights the progress made in the individual areas in the past year.

### **Training**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *By immediately developing and pursuing a more comprehensive and aggressive policy on post-secondary education and training for persons with disabilities, a shift in labour force participation will occur to closely approximate the general work force participation rates by the year 1995.*

Training is the key to employment, which, in turn, is one key to empowerment, independence, and a sense of self-worth. The **Action Plan** presents ten recommendations in the area of training. They are addressed to Alberta Career Development and Employment, Alberta Family and Social Services, and Alberta Advanced Education. In fiscal year 1991-92, as a result of the recommendations:

- Career Development and Employment met numerous times with Family and Social Services to discuss operational issues involved in the transfer of vocational services for people with disabilities from Family and Social Services to Career Development and Employment. Negotiations have been going on for more than a year; so far, the actual transfer of responsibility has yet to take place.
- the Premier's Council met with Career Development and Employment to review the first draft of their policy on vocational rehabilitation. However, no further action has occurred with respect to the policy.

## **Employment**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *Increase the labour force participation rate and the employment rate of persons with disabilities to more closely approximate that of the general population by 1995. Equitable representation of persons with disabilities at all earning levels by the year 2000.*

Albertans with disabilities are unemployed in vast numbers. If people with disabilities are to become independent, contributing members of this province's society, they must be given the opportunity to work. The **Action Plan** makes seven recommendations in the area of employment. They are addressed to Alberta Career Development and Employment, Alberta Economic Development and Trade, and Personnel Administration Office. In fiscal year 1991-92, as a result of the recommendations:

- Alberta Economic Development and Trade introduced Ability Plus, a program designed to increase opportunities for entrepreneurs with disabilities. Thirteen successful applicants in the Ability Plus program were given financial aid and business expertise in order to start a new business or expand an existing enterprise.

## **Education**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *By the year 2000, all Alberta children will have, as their right, access in their home communities, in their neighbourhood schools, to the same quality of education which is available to all other students.*

The Premier's Council strongly believes that integration is essential to give children with disabilities a sense of belonging and, ultimately, the best education possible. As such, the seven **Action Plan** recommendations in the area of education emphasize integration as the first choice. The recommendations are made to Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education. In 1991-92, as a result of the recommendations:

- an Integration Advisory Committee was established in 1991.
- the Premier's Council advised Alberta Education during the development of a draft policy on integration.
- the Yellowhead School Division Integrated Services Review was established to evaluate the success of that school division's integration policy and process. The project consultant, with assistance from an advisory group, completed their report in June 1991. The report indicated that the school division's policy on integration was highly successful.

## **Recreation**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *To create full accessibility to all publicly funded recreation facilities and leisure pursuits by the year 2000, so that every Albertan has an equitable opportunity to improve the quality of his or her life through pursuit of recreational and leisure activities of choice.*

The Premier's Council position is that facilities and events in the areas of culture, recreation and sport be completely accessible in order to ensure integration. The **Action Plan** presented four recommendations; two to Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, and two to Alberta Recreation and Parks. Developments in 1991-92 include:

- Alberta Recreation and Parks (now Tourism, Parks and Recreation) completed an inventory of facilities, indicating levels of accessibility. Funds have been allocated to upgrade accessibility within regions.
- assistive listening devices for people who are hard of hearing are available at the Jubilee Auditoriums in Edmonton and Calgary.

## **Transportation**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *Barrier free transportation systems within the province that meet transportation needs for local and intraprovincial travel, as well as barrier free pedestrian environments within municipalities, by the year 2000.*

Travelling freely between and in our communities is something most non-disabled Albertans take for granted. On the other hand, people with disabilities are often prevented from such mobility because of inaccessible transportation systems and environments. The **Action Plan** presented seven recommendations in this area, all addressed to Alberta Transportation and Utilities, which has responded most receptively. In 1991-92, developments included:

- Alberta Transportation and Utilities developing and promoting a barrier free transportation policy.
- Alberta Transportation and Utilities developing and announcing the establishment of four barrier free transportation pilot projects to test feasibility of barrier free designs across Alberta.

## **Housing**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *By the year 2000, persons with disabilities will have the same range of accessible and affordable housing options that other Albertans accept as their right.*

Albertans with disabilities are faced with a number of challenges finding suitable shelter options. These include insufficient income to meet their shelter needs, modifications to meet special needs, and, overall, a shortage of accessible housing. Three recommendations were addressed to Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing, and one to Alberta Labour. In 1991-92, as a result of the recommendations:

- the Cross Disability Advisory Committee on Housing was created.

## **Accessibility**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *Improve barrier free design and enforcement standards that will ensure that all new public buildings and external built environments such as sidewalks and parking areas are completely accessible to all persons with disabilities by the year 1996.*

Access to all public buildings is a right, and again is taken for granted by non-disabled Albertans. Yet persons with disabilities are often prevented from accessing public buildings and facilities because of architectural barriers. The **Action Plan** made a total of seven recommendations to Alberta Labour, Alberta Treasury, and Alberta Lotteries. The following developments took place in 1991-92 as a result of the recommendations:

- Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services met with the Premier's Council to review their plans to survey and prioritize needed modifications to government buildings to improve accessibility.
- the Building Code was altered to reflect a focus on accessibility features to accommodate people with sensory disabilities. The Code was also changed to include mandatory accessibility on main floors in walk-up apartment buildings.
- the Highway Traffic Act was changed to allow municipalities to enforce correct use of disabled parking stalls on private properties open to the public.
- the Barrier Free Design Guide was revised to reflect changes to the Building Code.

## **Personal Supports**

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**Action Plan Objective** - *A comprehensive personal supports unit that is capable of meeting the support needs of persons with disabilities, regardless of their age or stage of life, to be developed April 1, 1992.*

One of the greatest hurdles facing Albertans with disabilities as they attempt to access supports is the large number of government programs offered. The sheer volume of programs and, in turn, different entry criteria too often results in confusion and frustration for the consumer. A total of nine recommendations were made. Needless to say, the objective of the **Action Plan** was not met on time. However, some developments occurred in 1991-92.

- An interdepartmental task force set up to evaluate the recommendation of a consolidated, locally available Community Supports Program delivered its final report. The report was not supportive of the recommendation.
- The Premier's Council engaged a consultant to revisit the concept. The consultant's report was completed and indicated that a Community Supports Program was feasible within a four year time frame.
- The Premier's Council continued to educate consumers, community agencies, politicians and bureaucrats on the Community Supports Program.
- In an effort to develop better community resources for people with mental illness, meetings were held with government officials and community organizations to discuss the establishment of a pilot project similar to that of the Dane County Model in Wisconsin.
- Home Care (Alberta Health), with assistance from the Premier's Council, developed the Self Managed Care Pilot Project.
- The Council assisted Alberta Health in preliminary work to define sector role statements.
- The Council commenced a series of meetings with the Deputy Minister responsible for seniors to discuss the downsizing of Red Deer's Michener Centre.

## ***Financial Supports***

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***Action Plan Objective*** - *A revamped income support system that renews its commitment to the dignity and independence of persons with severe disabilities by 1992.*

For some people, severe disability coupled with lack of education and employment skills, means dependence on government for financial support. That support is delivered by the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program. The Premier's Council believes the AISH program should be modified to better serve those who subscribe to it, and made two recommendations in the ***Action Plan*** to Alberta Family and Social Services and Alberta Career Development and Employment to achieve that. Again, the ***Action Plan*** Objective has not been met on time. In 1991-92:

- AISH was increased by \$41.00 for a total of \$796.00 a month. However, that figure is still well short of the \$950.00 a month Alberta seniors receive, to which AISH was supposed to be comparable.

## ***Information***

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***Action Plan Objective*** - *To establish by 1992 a province-wide disability-related information network to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, their families and other stakeholders.*

Without easy access to information, people with disabilities are often unaware of the many programs and services available to them. The ***Action Plan*** recommends the development of an Alberta Information Network (AIN) to meet this important need. In 1991-92, as a result of this recommendation:

- A provincial conference was held in Edmonton to discuss expectations of the Alberta Information Network.



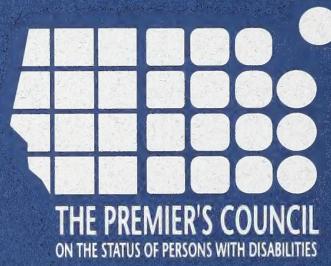
**Premier's Council On The Status Of Persons With Disabilities**  
**Statement Of Expenditures Year Ended March 31, 1992 / Unaudited**

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	Authorized	Expended	Unexpended (Overexpended)
<b>Manpower</b>			
Salaries - Permanent	-	79,158.00	(79,158.00)
Salaries - Non-Permanent	104,600.00	105,552.00	(952.00)
Contract Employees	183,100.00	112,858.00	70,242.00
Employer Contributions	33,300.00	23,922.00	9,378.00
Allowances & Benefits	5,000.00	3,722.00	1,278.00
<b>Total Manpower</b>	<b>326,000.00</b>	<b>325,212.00</b>	<b>788.00</b>
<b>Supplies and Services</b>			
Travel Expenses	86,000.00	37,948.00	48,052.00
Advertizing	10,000.00	3,402.00	6,598.00
Freight & Postage	26,000.00	16,792.00	9,208.00
Rentals	6,000.00	12,892.00	(6,892.00)
Telephone & Communications	4,000.00	5,132.00	(1,132.00)
Repairs & Maintenance	5,000.00	3,538.00	1,462.00
Contract Services	193,280.00	208,378.00	(15,098.00)
Data Processing Services	2,500.00	-	2,500.00
Hosting	9,000.00	8,753.00	246.00
Other Purchased Services	19,000.00	26,207.00	(7,206.00)
Materials & Supplies	13,500.00	9,022.00	4,478.00
<b>Total Materials &amp; Supplies</b>	<b>374,280.00</b>	<b>332,064.00</b>	<b>42,216.00</b>
<b>Supplies and Services</b>			
Data Processing Equipment	8,000.00	5,302.00	2,698.00
Purchase - Office Equipment	-	1,204.00	(1,204.00)
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>6,506.00</b>	<b>1,494.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditure 91/92</b>	<b>708,280.00</b>	<b>663,782.00</b>	<b>44,498.00</b>







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